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NUMERICAL STATISTICS

OF

WESLEYAN METHODISM

FOR

THE UNITED KINGDOM

OF

GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND

FOR THE LAST EIGHTY YEARS,

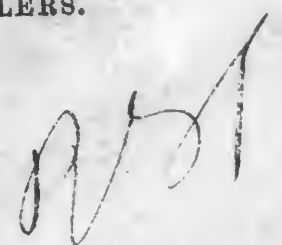
BY BAILEY HILLYARD.

LONDON :

PUBLISHED BY JOHN KAYE, 80, FLEET STREET:

AND TO BE HAD OF ALL BOOKSELLERS.

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[ENTERED AT STATIONERS' HALL.]

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INTRODUCTORY OBSERVATIONS.

The Author of this publication has again presumed to appear before the Christian public, on the subject of Wesleyan Methodism. The January number of the *Christian Witness*, in the year 1847, contains an article with the signature of "ALEPH;" he now avows himself its writer. It was his intention to have published a pamphlet some time since, from a conviction that it was due from him to many who had noticed his communications both in print and otherwise; and this he would have done had he been in a position to do so. Had this been practicable, he would have noticed certain tracts of those times, more notorious than the *Ghosts of Wesley and Whitfield*, and much less to the purpose, ghosts as they were. He then thought, and still thinks, that there were plenty of living witnesses without calling up the dead, and quite enough of facts without resorting to fancy. We don't need ghosts to tell us what is amiss, nor fancy, with such facts as we have at hand; besides, "we have a sure Prophetic Word."

The Author believes himself in possession of a portion of Wesleyan truth, which ought to be circulated about Wesleyan homes. He believes his Tabular Views are new things in the earth, made up of things new and old, shewing the numerical results of eighty years working of the system of Wesleyanism, and he conceives it ought to appear. It is a portion of ecclesiastical lore of modern date, and it may be of great practical moment. It will be interesting, he presumes, to the present generation, if not to succeeding ones. Such a body of Christians never existed before; they ought to know what they have done, and what they are doing, and how they do it; they ought to compare the former times with the present, what was then done, and what now; they ought to look at the excellencies and the defects of the constitution, the beauty and deformity of the organization, the order and propriety of its administration; they should consider what it has done, what it ought to do, what it can do, and see that it is done. Their power is great for good, terrible for evil, tremen-

dous in responsibility. They have power to move the world; but their work is to save it. They have done much, can do much, and must do much more, or RETIRE ! Their founder asks for it, their capabilities require it, their Lord insists upon it, their welfare depends upon it, and it is equitably expected by the Societies. I have done what my time, abilities, and other avocations would permit, in trying to place before the community, in a form they never had before, their own numerical condition : what it is they can easily understand as far as the British Isles are concerned. I have busied myself with facts, and not theories ; with the actual, not forgetting the possible ; with what has been, what is, and what ought to have been. No man is injured by knowing the true state of his affairs, by being shown what he was in former years, and what he is now. Show him what he did with a certain capital and agency, and he will know what he ought to do with that agency and capital twice or thrice told. If he is a good man, a wise man, and a righteous one, he won't be content with two-thirds less remunerative profit, when he is employing two-thirds more property and hands. Is not this somewhat the condition of the Wesleyan Methodists of this our day ? Have they not two-thirds more property, literally as well as spiritually ? two-thirds, I speak in round numbers, more agents than once, and is not their profit, judging by numerical process, two-thirds less than formerly ? Let our schedules speak to the question. Why should it be kept in abeyance, darkened by words without wisdom, candour, or truth ? Let a man know the worst of his affairs, and if he is worthy the name of a man he will set himself to work in earnest at amendment. And the Wesleyan people cannot too soon nor too certainly know their comparative retrograde position ; what they have lost, and how much they are in debt. If I know my position, I can tell what exertion will be required. Half-informed, half-affected, and half-moved. To be thoroughly aroused we should know all, and all the worst, as well as the best of our case. There is here nought of faction any more than of fiction, nought of envy any more than nought of malice. The writer is no enemy to Methodism rightly understood, nor to Methodism rightly administered. She is better in designed constitution than in actual administration, and capable of great improvements in both : present rulers

must recede or reform, a better race succeed them, time will effect what policy may retard, interest may imprison what philanthropy will liberate, despotism may sway for a time but liberty will ultimately triumph. The people have long muttered and peeped, but the time is come for them to speak out, and be heard ; the doors have long been shut against them, but they must be forced open, and truth and right will do it.

I anticipate an enquiry, Why so greatly interested in numerical statistics, and not a page about the financials ? I answer : the Minutes of Conference are somewhat mute on this subject, except as to the times, modes, plans, and agents for producing that which so many have so little to do with. If I remember right, only two, the contingent and the children's, are formally and to any extent noticed. True, reports of others exist in isolated pamphlets ; hence the difficulty of reaching them. I have, however, been spoken to about procuring the necessary documents for a *tabular view of financial progress*, but, as to this, I pledge nothing, but leave myself open to circumstances. I believe nevertheless, that financial affairs are better known than numerical ones, as a whole it must be, we say so much ; it cannot be much more, for our numbers form somewhat of a criterion.

I am fully satisfied that the Wesleyan people ought to have more to do with both the financial and numerical, the legislative and the administrative departments ; and the proceedings of the Conference at the sittings recently "begun in Manchester" will hasten on "the wished-for consummation." The powers Wesleyan "that be" may shield themselves behind a deed poll, a confederal edict, and president, but all must come under a review, as Wesley would have it were he among them ;—antiquated and modern unscriptural rules must give way and yield to the requirements of reason, equity, scripture, and the times ; and these can never, properly viewed, disagree.

The Author does not imagine that his mite will be altogether useless, for mountains are made up of atoms, and oceans of drops. A word or two may be thought desirable about the source of his statistical information ; it is the Annual Minutes,—and he has searched them from 1767 to 1849, year by year, circuit by circuit, and name by name. He went to the fountain head, and drank there ;

he did it alone, unaided ; he did it unsolicited, and therefore voluntarily ; he did it without any notion of gain, or even of publishing ; but events have occurred which appeared to direct his attention to them ; and what he has published in 1847, and the present pamphlet, is the result. He thought his information should not remain in his bureau, that the times demanded it, that the christian public would welcome it. He may be mistaken, but hopes not. What has been produced at great cost to him, will be distributed for a comparative trifle to the purchaser, and he trusts he shall not be disappointed. He conceives he holds some truths, and that they would be better distributed by the press to the four winds than pent up in his own bosom. As the community have a right to them, he would not longer withhold them ; he imagines it would be a species of detaining the truth in unrighteousness to do so ; hence he has "written a book," to what purpose remains to be seen. Some may fear for the correctness of these figures ; but to afford the doubter one proof of their correctness, I will direct his attention to two columns in Table No. VI. the one contains the number of members and ministers in the United Kingdom ; the other the actual decennial increase from 1769 to 1849, and the reader will see that I have added the first number, 28,263, in the former column, to the sum total of the latter, and they agree with the total number of members in society in 1849, viz, 370,495, thus affording a direct proof of their correctness for our period of 80 years ; and if he will examine the Minutes of the present year, he will find I am correct.

For the information of my readers I will state, that just before the close of the last century the New Connexion was formed, and as they took many members with them, we must not forget that fact while looking at that period of our table ; but for this secession the increase of 1799 would have been considerably more than appears in the Minutes and our table ; yet as it was, it was the greatest amount of increase of any ten years period we have given, and doubtless that Methodism ever knew. Nor should it be forgotten, that from 1789 to 1799, was a very memorable period on the European continent. I will also remind him, that in the next deceniary, the nucleus of the Primitive Methodist body appeared, but I have reason to believe this rather enlarged than diminished the parent

body, they being an original section and having commenced with a few members ; now, however, they number about 90,000, while the New Connexion does not much exceed 20,000. I may also state that it was near the end of the sixth deceniary, 1829, that the Protestant Methodist Society arose, taking many members with them, and that the last secession, that of the Association Methodists, took place in the seventh deceniary period, so that during the last ten years in which we note the smallest amount of numerical advance, there was no general secession from the connexion, and what did occur was principally in Cornwall, and mostly on account of the Total Abstinence question.

I will now introduce another, though I trust it will not be deemed a foreign topic, I feel as though some voice was addressing me with "Rut what about the '*Fly Sheets*?' Is the writer ignorant of their existence?" To these questions I reply, I am not ; but my acquaintance with them is newly formed. It occurred to me, that, having finished my M.S., I would not put it to press until I had read those disturbers of the repose of the connexion. I have now read them, and was I called upon to say whether regret, surprize, or indignation took the lead, it would be difficult to say which preponderated, for each ran high ! I own I was quite unprepared for the disclosure of such a mass of facts capable of telling, if proved, so fearfully upon some of the most celebrated ministers in the connexion. The authors of the "*Fly Sheets*" appear to be within the circle, the author of the pamphlet is without ; they write about the polity and administration of one individual, he of the numerical condition of the body ; they appear to arrive at the conclusion that, for the last thirty years, the administration has been a source of greater evil to the body than of good : he seems to have adduced evidence of the fact of a comparative retrograde state during the same period. They have written of what they know of their relations and creations ; he of what he has met with in his. Their position differed from his ; equally different is the medium and their aim ; their foundation and superstructure vary from his, and yet, in a very significant point, there is agreement. They knew nothing of the existence of my M.S. ; I was ignorant of the contents of theirs. They are original writers and independent witnesses, and the

same observation may be allowed in reference to myself. They shew what and where there appears much amiss to them, and suggest a mode of correction. He presents a mass of numericals presenting a result of an equally, yea, more fearful and distressing character. The significant point of agreement above referred to is, the *period*,—the last thirty years. This was the fact that so strongly impressed me, and but for which I should not have thus introduced the "*Fly Sheets*" to my readers' notice, here the respective writers appear to jut, although, except here, they never met. The Author and his subject are now fairly, if not tardily, before those who may favor him with a perusal ; and I now pass on to my main object.

CHAPTER I.

METHODISM.—WESLEYAN METHODISM.

History furnishes us with important and interesting periods, indeed it is the character of events at a given time that constitutes the peculiarity and importance of the epoch. It is true of dynasties, empires, and peoples ; of literature, the arts, and sciences ; of commerce, and indeed of every thing connected with man. In Patriarchal, Jewish, and Primitive Christian eras, many stirring and instructive, not to say marvelous and miraculous facts, are upon record. Comparatively, modern times too have their characters and events, and these are even more accurately, minutely, and extensively recorded than those we justly consider the authorized and more archite annals of our world.

The general reader may recollect facts, met with in the course of his literary pursuits, confirmatory of the truth of these remarks.

The early part of the eighteenth century was an interesting period to the ecclesiastical historian and the observant Christian ; it is well known that then, what is usually denominated a revival of Christianity took place, the most prominent feature of which was the rise of

an ecclesiastical community, under the fostering and successful hand of JOHN WESLEY, a giant in his day ; and notwithstanding some generally admitted defects, a blessing to humanity, and a pillar to the Universal Church ; he consolidated and legalized the society shortly before he went to his great reward, and since that time, his coadjutors and successors have, annually, progressed with the general improvement of the age in territorial empire, and as a whole, in numerical increase to the society, in the home departments and on the foreign stations.

It is impossible to survey Methodism from its origin to the present period and growth, without a feeling of surprize, if not astonishment, for considering what it has originated, and directly and indirectly effected, in the new world as well as in the old, we have proofs that stupendous good has been achieved. It will be obvious that I now advert to every community avowedly Methodist and Wesleyan. It is highly probable that little, if any thing short of ten millions of our race are attending on the ministry of Methodism in one or other of its connexions or congregations. Commencing in a unit, it now commands millions of adherents. What has made it so swiftly progressive among Adam's posterity, embracing so large a sphere, and so great a diversity of the human family ? Surely there must be some common element of it, to be so quickly ahead of any one of the previously existing non-conforming churches.

The amount and rapidity of the successes of this class of Christian people stand alone in ecclesiastical history, that within a century and a quarter such strides should be made upon the territories of man ; and may we not safely affirm that whatever materially affects this class, especially in its more original and enlarged associations, must interest all who are concerned in the diffusion of revealed truth and the weal of the world. And may we not aver that it deserves the attention of the Christian philosopher, and that it will well repay the study of the philanthropist and the divine. Quitting, however, the general subject of Methodism, let us look at the parent of it, now known as the Wesleyan Methodist Society, or, as many now prefer, "Church ;" but previously to entering on the professed object of this publication, it is presumed a few more general observations may not be thought out of place.

Wesleyan Methodism then, we observe, still retains that elemental characteristic from which she appears to have derived her cognomen, now and for generations past so familiar. She still possesses *method*, and in a sense, and with certain qualifications, we may say she is well-ordered and sure. Her system is, perhaps, unequalled, her organization tending towards completion, her legislation comprehensive, minute, and unique; in agencies she superabounds. Her empire is the world; her avowed object the dissemination of revealed truth; her position elevated; her influence commanding; her institutions diversified and benevolent; her fundamental doctrines scriptural; her discipline is as efficient, her ministry as intelligent, her officers as industrious, her people as devoted and consistent, as those of other religious communities; and as to her successes, they stand unparalleled. Her opulence and literary character and aspirations are known by the centenary movement and its unexpected and unprecedented revolt. Generally, she is an object of contempt to the Papist, of jealousy to the Protestant Church of England as by law established, of peculiar interest to dissent, and of aversion to the thoughtless masses who surround them. Exceptions assuredly there are. To her own people, those who are "thorough Wesleyans," she is a paragon of superiority and pre-eminence.—"None like her!" Her moral influence and religious bearing have been superior to any other Christian society the world has ever witnessed, and through her labours thousands now behold the King in his beauty! If these statements are true, who can wonder at the power she wields, the authority she exercises, the schemes she devises, the resources she can command, and the general issues to which she is conducted in her multifarious departments of Christian effort.

However, she seems not yet settled, not quite complete; she is looking for greater and other results, fresh accumulations, literary, pecuniary, organic, and ecclesiastic; for a more consolidated, less itinerating, pastor-like, gentlemanly, and leisurely ministry; a more graduated classification of inferior orders, and a more bishop-like accretion of "Superintendent," "Elder," and "Deacon." These propositions could be easily borne out by quotations from certain publications, and more than corroborated by the organs of the connexion, the avowed predilections of

some of her leading ministers and influential members, and the signs of the times in Wesleyan drawing-rooms.

Doubtless she is of great importance as a section of the church of Jesus Christ, to our own nation and the world. Whether we view her politically, morally, or religiously, she cannot be spared! And who that considers her origin, and founder, her progress, extent, and position, the amount of good she has done, and what she is, and may become capable of effecting for the welfare of humanity, can be without emotion of a peculiar character, without hopes and fears as to her future movements and final condition? She appears destined to rise, and has the elements of elevation within herself; but she may fall, although possessing the power effectually to avert it; and should she be wise enough to understand present indications, she will survey some portions of her constitution and amend them, review her administrations and improve them, examine her appointments and adjust them to the reasonable and scriptural requirements of her people. It would be sad to see such a christian system retrograde or deteriorate, and become either an object of distrust or pity, and these and more may be anticipated if she should become stationary, however symmetrical, beautiful, and splendid.

I will now pass on to notice two objectionable features of the body, thrown upon the surface by recent events and proceedings—

The first is :—The profound deference which is paid to Wesleyan Methodism by its votaries.

The second :—The superciliousness of bearing shown by certain writers towards persons, not of Wesleyan origin or association, for pretending to remark upon its system and proceedings as if no one out of the pale could understand what Methodism is or what she ought to be.

We are fallen on strange times, we meet with strange assumptions, societies professing themselves christian are not content to abide by the decisions of the New Testament and the tests it presents, hence we are tested not merely by the righteous and gracious requirements of that heavenly code, but expected to conform to Popery or Churchism, to Dissent or Methodism, whichever we may choose to embrace. In the name of all that is holy, and righteous, and happy, what is Popery, or Churchism, or Dissent, or Wesleyan Methodism, especially the latter, that with many

it is a perpetual authority and rule almost co-ordinate with Scriptures themselves? May I ask if it is a system of divine appointment, as was the tabernacle, the priesthood, and the Levitical economy? I am persuaded I may, with deference answer, No, for is it not human in its origin? It cannot therefore rise higher than its source. Is it not human in its constitution, and therefore subject to the errors of humanity, and the imperfections inseparably connected with a probationary station? Is it not human in its maintenance, and therefore liable to all the fluctuations of those who support its fabric? and lastly, Is it not human in the agency of its administration, and therefore subject to the bigotries, prejudices, and interests of those who are constitutionally employed.

I fear I am touching the apple of the eye of many of the excellent of the earth, some of whom have said strange things and others have written bold and questionable ones. If I am not mistaken, Wesleyan Methodism has been called, though not exactly on confessional authority, "a divine expediency." If this be so, is it not obligatory on all to conform to it, but where are the proofs? Good men in their overweening fondness for their own peculium, are apt to feel ardently and speak strongly, as the devoted youth does to the mistress of his affections, but subsequent acquaintance convinces him of the extravagance and injustice of his commendations, both find that they are the descendants of that ancient couple Adam and Eve; there may possibly be a sense in which a man may say of his wife, "she is the best woman in the world," and if he did not think so he wronged her by taking her to the altar, but as to our beloved denominations 'tis wise to be a little more guarded in our encomiums; but more especially do I conceive it necessary to guard against asserting or admitting that such and such a system is "divine," simply because a gracious Providence has made that of a great and good man a blessing to our species. I say again, if Methodism is a "divine expediency," then the community have proofs at hand, and if they can produce them, they ought to command the world; for prove the divinity of a certain system of christian organization and you prove their right who possess it to rule, and my duty to obey; theirs to enforce, and mine to submit; but O, how many would be ready with a similar avowal were we to cede it

as the privilege of one of the denominations. To the church of God which he has purchased with His own blood I cheerfully cede divinity, while I would as strongly object to the term expediency, associated as it is a few lines above ; but I demur to the propriety of any christian community making such apparent pretensions. Do we not know that the Papacy and the Establishment are both conceived to be divine, and if Methodism is a "divine expediency," then we have a trinity of divinities ; to which must we bow ? To neither ! but to Him who is head over all things in the church, and who, although He has never stamped divinity upon either of these institutions as such, yet has saved His thousands by and with each of them, though some more than others. These considerations should abate the excesses of attachment to this or that system, and while lessening our regards for the human, increase our affections for the one only which is divine. And now a few words as to the second feature,—the assumed incompetence of those who are not Wesleyan

• **Methodists on Methodistic affairs,**

A writer in a Wesleyan newspaper, now defunct, was of opinion that "Truly Wesleyan Methodism would require a commentator of no mean order, to make the philosophy of its economy plain to the understandings of not a few of us." And a reverend vindicator of Wesleyan Methodism, in his letter to the Editor of the "*Christian Witness*," is of a similar mind, for he recommends the Rev. Doctor to "study Methodism ;" so that we have some grounds

• for saying Wesleyanism is become a very recondite subject, and therefore very few can understand it.

What, then, is Wesleyan Methodism *already* become so ponderous in her records, and so profound in her economy ? Is she so *unfortunate* so *soon* to resemble the Protestant Church of England as by law established, and the Papacy, whose two hundred and seventy folio volumes of standards form an ecclesiastical bottomless pit ? If Methodism is so voluminous, intricate, and recondite a subject, the more she is to be pitied or blamed, and the less reason have her defenders to taunt persons not "in Society" with ignorance of her character ; and if it is thus with the body now, what will be its condition in another hundred years ?

But, blessed be God ! we are not required to wade the sea of the Italian hierarchy, nor to search the archives of

Canterbury, nor yet the Ministers of Conference to understand what Christianity is. Methinks it would argue a sad reflection on the divine author of religion, if none but first-rate heads could make "the philosophy of its economy" plain to us. And it follows, I venture to say, that the sincere enquirer after revealed truth, can find it in those pages ; and if so, can form a sufficiently correct notion of the different sections around him, in so far as they do or do not agree with the inspired records, and therefore he may take the liberty of speaking and writing on the subject of Wesleyan Methodism, with as much propriety and safety as he may about any other portion of the Church of Christ.

We have said in effect, that Methodism, in all that it embraces, is the most stupendous fact in the records of the church. In itself it is a great result, and in its progress a great experiment. In Wesleyanism we see an exhibition of episcopacy on the voluntary principle. The Papacy has failed, the Protestant Establishment has failed in producing genuine Christianity in connexion with the state. How will it issue with Methodism ?

CHAPTER II.

THE MINUTES OF CONFERENCE.

Leaving these general remarks, I will now address myself a little to the Minutes of the Conference. I believe this is an annual but little noticed by the community, whose authoritative sayings and doings are presumed to be recorded in its pages. It is an important volume, in many respects interesting ; as a hand-book to the Ministers indispensable. Many sayings are there recorded, but not enough ; many doings, but far too few. Doubtless much transpires in Committees and Conferences that never presses the pages of the Conference year book. It instructs by its silence as well as its utterances, in the things it forgets as well as those it delights to honour ; and silence is often an attribute of wisdom. I would not write in this

strain, but I know some feel unutterable things that so much should transpire with such a head of such a body of which the members are not officially informed. This would be more tolerable if the Conference was an open assembly, open I mean to accredited members and officers.

Wesleyan periodicals, somehow, considering that there must be upwards of a million of persons who are either members or friends of the society, are not popular, even in the families of the members ; and I presume there can be no question but the minutes have the most restricted circulation, and are consequently the least known. This ought to be matter of deep regret, for, although they are very imperfect, yet in many respects they are capable of affording much information on the administration and working of the system, and the general aims of the Conference, together with the numerical condition of the connexion. It is well there is such a report of the state of society as a whole, this is very important, whether satisfactory or not. That the Wesleyan Conference archives contain more minute and elaborated details than what the published minutes do, I presume may be fairly taken for granted, and it is more than probable that there are many of the Ministers who are as little acquainted with them as the people they so zealously teach, and so conveniently govern. It is very desirable that the minutes furnished the societies with the number of persons annually admitted upon trial for membership, as well as what proportion of them become accredited members, of secessions and expulsions, of removals and emigrations, and the number of deaths. That a comparative view of the numerical state of each district and circuit with the preceding year, were also given ; and that each of the parts of the British Empire were published separately, as well as Ireland ; and why not the number of local preachers in each circuit, if not their names ; and the number of chapels and the debts upon them, would be a great acquisition ; and if a summary of the items, debit and credit, belonging to all the connexional institutions, so much the better, so that the total amounts of annual income and expenditure could be reached on each particular institution, and a great total of the whole exhibited. It is a capital defect in the annual minutes, that there are but two financial statements made in anything like detail,—the contingent fund and the chil-

dren's : and it is equally desirable that each of the subjects just alluded to, should appear in some authenticated and tangible form ; and only fair and becoming that each circuit should be furnished with copies of the minutes for general, and I would add, *gratuitous* distribution among the officials of the circuit.

I am quite aware of the objections that may be made to so full and general a view of the financials of the body every year, one would be—the difficulties, labours, and expenses connected with a proper statement of such an amount of particulars.

To this I reply—talk of difficulties, labours, and expenses, to those who originated the model deed, and carried it to the point of general adoption, who broached the subject of the centenary movement, and prosecuted it with such an amount of unlooked-for success, who have procured a Missionary premises in a Centenary Hall, in Bishopsgate Street, and a Theological Institution, located in the vicinities of Manchester and the Metropolis. These, to name no more, were “begun, continued, and ended” in about ten years : and what cannot such a body do, with such a dictator, when they are determined to carry a point on which the heart is set ? for the people are all with him.

Another objection I anticipate, would probably be—were we to insert as much as is here apparently desired, it would take too many more of our valuable brother Ministers, capable of such labours, out of their more proper business and ministerial calling.

Here I answer, first :—does not the objection refute itself, inasmuch as it condemns the present practice in many instances, and to a great extent, if not totally ? The obligation implies that the Ministers have a proper work, and that they ought not to be taken from it and placed in subordinate occupations. I ask if it would be improper to take more Ministers out of their proper sphere, whether it was ever proper to take even one ? If the former course is wrong, can the latter be right ?

It has happened before now, that when men are working for themselves, and their own order, difficulties, labours, and expences, are as straw ; but too often when required to work for others, they become mountains. O these intractable people ! What impracticable things they ask. May we be allowed to throw out a hint by way of query ?

—Are our leading commercial princes their own accountants? Do railway directors and engineers drudge at pounds, shillings, and pence? Do our state officials get up the details of their office? No, indeed! They respectively keep, and respectfully retain their proper places, and do their legitimate work. And why should the Ministers of Jesus Christ leave theirs. If one good reason for their so doing can be produced, may we not venture to say that hundreds could be adduced on the other side of the question? But more seriously; is there such a paucity of honesty, piety, and talent, in the Wesleyan church, that the Ministers must become servants in a work and department never designed for them by the blessed author of the gospel? Must they, for want of faithful and efficient hands to save them from the drudgery, the disgrace, the danger, and the crime, of leaving their proper work; must they, I ask, do that of an inferior order of men? No man, we presume, who knows what the body is, will for a moment believe it, however it may seem to be implied in the present conduct of Wesleyan administrators.

We are aware that there are separate reports of many, if not of all the institutions of the connexion, and of the propriety and necessity of this we are sensible, and we know it cannot be dispensed with for more reasons than one. Yet we more than *suggest* the propriety of the minutes containing such a general statement of the entire receipts and expenditure of the society, as would possess so much of interest as to gratify the general reader, and so much of utility as to become a necessary appendage to every circuit officer. And may we not assume that this could be as easily given as the name, standing, office, and location of every Minister and Preacher in the connexion. I further presume, that with regard to the Ministers themselves, there may be a pleasing addition made to the present yearly information, by publishing a tabular view of them, under some such heads as the following:—candidates for the ministry, the number admitted upon the four years' probation, distinguishing them by the first, second, third, and fourth probationary year; those not ordained on account of being abroad or from some other cause; those who are ordained; who have travelled fourteen years; and then, in a set of columns appropriately arranged, a view of the Ministers in full work, supernumeraries, and superanu-

ated : and would it not be still more interesting, if the names of the legal hundred were annually published ? and it would heighten the interest, if there could be appended, a view of those Ministers who annually cease to be recognized among them, stating, in addition to the present information, how many have seceded, desisted from travelling, been expelled, and died. And as to the theological institution, it would be gratifying to know how many there are, and, if any, how many have left that seat of training for other sections of the church, or for no section at all ; and with regard to the mighty affairs of connexional property, I mean especially chapels and premises under Trustees. Notwithstanding the minutes, we are comparatively in darkness as to their numbers, value, and liabilities. The tremendous character of this item ought to be more generally known ; I suppose trustess and chapel stewards can't forget any more than they can comprehend its pressure and amount.

In short, the yearly minutes appear to many to be seriously defective in the method and amount of information they render on the following subjects :—*the Institutions—the Agents—the Funds—the Members of Society—the Candidates for Membership—and, the Proportion of those who become Members.*

As I have ventured to call this celebrated annual imperfect, it seemed proper that I should specify some instances in which it appears capable of great improvement. As however I may have touched a very tender part, the mere clerkships held by the ministers of the gospel, it may be expected that I have some suggestion to offer as an improvement upon this department, and I would simply, and at once ask—Why not let the work of mere accountants and clerks be done by that class of men ? And are there not some or many such to be found in every circuit, or at least in every district ; and where should the connexion look for such assistants better than among the worthy, intelligent, and too often indigent local preachers ? many of whom with large liabilities, and small resources, might be substantially aided by some improved arrangement in reference to the point in hand : and failing in any instance among these, seek for such as may be required among those who understand and love the system. At all events I cannot help thinking, that it is high time to look

in the face, the questionable custom of appointing reverend gentlemen to the offices of book-stewards, treasurers, and secretaries, a practice which seems to merge the highest office among men, in that, which is ordinary and comparatively unimportant. As I presume the arguments in favor of such a course as here suggested are obvious to every considerate person, I shall not adduce them, but leave the subject to make its own impressions.

CHAPTER III.

NUMERICAL STATISTICS.

Having made these, I hope not obtrusive nor irrelevant observations, let us proceed to the contents of the accompanying tabular views of Wesleyan statistics for the last eighty years. It will be seen that the decenary period has been adopted as the most eligible, for the purpose of comparisons. It is not so much what a man in business does annually, as what are the results of a given period, or several such : yet to arrive at this, the annual state must be known and recorded. The observation will apply, and we believe, pertinently, to the numerical results before us. The basis of these tables is one previously prepared, commencing in the year 1767, and continuing to the present year, 1849. It is the first of my series, and is marked No. 1. I once contemplated taking in the foreign stations, but abandoned it, and in reference to the publication of these with some financial statistics, I shall leave myself open to the indications of Providence.

I hope the tables presented, will speak for themselves. I have attempted to make them do so, and trust I have succeeded ; and should any errors be detected, I rely on the candour and indulgence of my readers, to attribute them to any thing rather than a want of caution or dereliction of principle.

I am aware that it is customary with the introduction of such tables, to give a few directions for understanding them.

I am afraid, on the one hand, of insulting the intelligent reader, well versed in such matters, by complying with the usual mode, and on the other I feel reluctant to leave them without "note or comment," for the sake of those not so intelligent and well versed. To commence, then, I observe that Table No 1, shews the number of circuits, &c., in the Wesleyan Methodist connexion, for each year, arranged for each part of the United Kingdom.

It will be seen next, that the first column in each of the Tables numbered 2, 3, 4, and 5, contains the year, and all upon a line with it, shews the state of society in each specified particular, at that period. It will be observed that these relate to England, Ireland, Scotland, and Wales. There follow the year in each of these tables nine columns, which give the number of circuits, the number of preachers in full work, the supernumeraries, the number of members; the increase of members per preacher, in the ten years; the number of members to a minister, at the end of each decade; the proportion of supernumeraries to the travelling preachers; and the two last, the actual and comparative increase, taking as a basis the number of ministers in the first year of each decade. These observations are also applicable to tables 3, 4, and 5. I now proceed to table number 6, which embraces the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, the 1st column containing the year, the 2nd, the number of working ministers, the 3rd, the supernumeraries, and the 4th, the number of members in society. The next column contains the decennial increase, shewing the number of members added to the society in each of the ten years. On the line with 1769, no figures are found in this column, because we start with this year, and there are none in the next column till 1789, because comparison commences here. We now reach a column that will require particular notice: it differs from all the rest in several respects; they represent a matter of fact condition, this a comparative one; they shew what was the real increase in each ten years, while this shews what it could have been, supposing it equal to the ratio of our first ten years. And not to return to this point again, I note, that on referring to the years 1789 and 1799, it will be found that these decades were more productive than the first, for, from the column of computed increase, it appears that these two

periods are less than in the column shewing the actual state of things. In running, however, the eye down to 1849, it will be perceived that in every succeeding decade, from 1799 to the present year, 1849, there has been a comparative falling off in the increase of members, so that, so far from keeping pace with the advance of the first ten years, which was very inferior to the two next similar periods we find in 1849, an actual increase of only 37,044, not much more than half the number at the decade ending in 1839 ; whereas, had the ratio of the first period been realized, the increase for this year would have been 168,493. This is deemed enough to explain the object of this column. The next exhibits the general average of the supernumerary and travelling preachers, throughout the British Empire. In order to show the decennial increase of members to a minister, I have introduced four columns, the 1st takes the actual number of preachers for 1769 as the basis ; the 2nd, the number at the year 1774, and each tenth year ; the 3rd gives the average number of preachers in each ten years ; and the 4th, the average of these three results. These columns differ from similar ones in tables 2, 3, 4, and 5, they being separately for England, Ireland, Scotland, and Wales, whereas these show the increase per preacher, in the whole British Empire. Here are variations exhibited, but nearly the same in result. It does not strike me as necessary to show issues on this basis, as to the other columns, that would be similarly affected by such a course, because the table No. 1, will place any person in a position to make his own comparisons. The other two columns relative to the number of members to a minister at the end of each decade, will speak for themselves. It is presumed, more need not be said by way of explanation of our tables. And while this is admitted, it is presumed the Author is at liberty to make such observations for the use of his readers, or for the expression of his own views, as he may think proper. As to the circuits, then, I observe a regular increase in their number, hence there must be a reduction in the travelling department of the itinerant system ; more time for reading, study, and other exercises connected with the pastorate. Primitive circuits resembled counties rather than otherwise, and perhaps the present districts are scarcely so extensive as were the circuits in the early days of Methodism. If they have

been so reduced in eighty years, what will they resemble in another century ?

As to the ministers in full work, we find a gradual increase, but on comparing the successive decades as to the number of members to a minister, we see that they have not increased in so great a proportion as the members, in either of the parts of the empire : a glance at the columns in question will be enough.

As to the supernumeraries, here also is an increase, and on referring to the 7th column of No. 6 table it will be seen what has been the progress each ten years ; they scarcely need notice until we reach 1789, when there was one in twenty-three ; in 1799, one in twenty ; in 1809, one in sixteen ; in 1819, one in eight ; in 1829, one in six ; in 1839, the same, with a smaller fraction ; and in 1849 one in five.

With regard to the tabular views generally, my readers will make their own comparisons, which it is presumed and hoped they will easily do, both from the designed simplicity of the tables, and the few directions and explanations that have been tendered. Different readers will take different views, will possess different sentiments, and occupy different localities. It is hoped, the schedules will have sufficient in them to interest and inform the readers on both sides of the Tweed, or the famed green Isle, and the Welsh mountaineer, should this trifling contribution to ecclesiastical affairs in Wesleyan circles extend itself so far.

Here are facts for volumes—subjects for the intelligent, the experienced, and the pious,—for warm hearts and ready hands :—but I will only venture on a few remarks.

If I am not mistaken these tables tell many tales of no ordinary importance. To commence at the commencement : there is an increase of circuits in the four departments from 45 to 496. This is no trifle ; here are, in our whole period and in our own islands, 451 additional places, marking the residences of hundreds of preachers of the gospel, in so many additional localities so many more deposits of divine truth, as well as places of worship, and the general accompaniments to such accessions.

Proceeding to our table No. 6, in the second column we find an increase of travelling preachers, from 109 to 1150, here then is an additional power of the better sort, for

the great interests of humanity; no less than 1041 more heralds of the gospel of peace in this one body and in our native land; with all the auxiliaries of the local ministry and class-leaders, Sunday-school teachers, &c.

In the third column of the same table, we have an increase of supernumerary and superannuated ministers from two to two hundred and twenty; this is a melancholy fact, doubtless every individual of this honorable class feels it to be so. The idea of positive inefficiency for labour to a right-hearted preacher of the gospel, must be to him the greatest of all his sublunary evils; only the grace and favor of Jesus Christ could keep such an one in his right mind. Such is the superannuated minister of Christ. But he is not without his reward in possession and in prospect; and as to the partially inefficient, thus is less intolerable, they can do a little, and their services are generally appreciated by those among whom they "sit down;" such are the supernumeraries. It is distressing there should be so many, 220, one in every five of the whole number in the present year. Nor is it less affecting that there should be an increase of this class of ministers, in 1769, one in fifty-four; and in 1849, one in five!

I cannot tell how it is with the papal system, with the clergy of our national establishment, nor the ministers among the congregational churches, but it would be interesting to know what proportion the working clergy bear to the worn-out in other communities. However I speak under correction, but have been informed that this class of ministers in the American Methodist Episcopal Church, is about one in every fifteen.

There would appear an amazing amount of wear and tear of nerve and muscle among Wesleyans, especially in modern times. These facts appear highly suggestive as well as affecting. The circuits are increased, twelve to one; and the itinerating labours in general in the same ratio, reducing every decenary, lessening labour, and at the same time and to a greater degree, increasing the number of worn-out preachers; but I leave this subject to those whom it may more concern, and proceed to the column of numbers of members in society. And here too is a great fact, an increase in our period of 80 years in the British department, from

been so reduced in eighty years, what will they resemble in another century ?

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28,263 to 370,495 members, averaging upwards of four thousand annual increase throughout the period, and with all the abatements in the judgment of charity herself, it is a great result, nearly 300000 more than when the great founder left his important charge for his eternal reward. These are gratifying issues of human progress in the gospel warfare ; doubtless this has already furnished results in the invisible worlds ; but, we must wait to know what they are : so much for the actual condition.

When an intelligent commercial man takes his stock, he naturally compares it with past years, in doing which, to form a correct estimate, he not only looks at the net annual results, but at the capital and agency employed. We know the difference between the material of the man of business, and that of the preacher of the cross of Christ. Yet, may we not venture the assertion, that the providential rule may be depended on in both cases ? “The hand of the diligent maketh rich,” because the blessing of the Lord attends the diligent hands. With these preliminaries I proceed to compare the increase as shown in table No. 2, for England. I here assume the success of the ministry should have kept pace with our primitive period—from 1769 to 1770—taking the number of working ministers for the first year of the first decade. On perusing these figures it will be perceived, as noticed above, that the second and third ten years’ increase, considerably surpassed our first, this being at the rate of 14 members per year to each preacher, they being severally, the former, from 1779 to 1789, sixteen ; and the latter, from 1789 to 1799, nineteen ; the next, twelve ; the next, thirteen ; to 1829, eight ; to 1839, the same ; and 1849, four to each minister per year. The sum totals of the two columns, in table No. 6, the actual and the computed interest, presents the difference between

617,988* the computed, and
370,495 the actual state, shewing

247,493 less in society than there would

* The number is made up of members in society in 1769, 28263
Increase of the next ten years - - - - - 14244
And the assumed comparative increase in the other periods 575481

have been, supposing the first ten years' ratio had been maintained. Should any of my readers think, that by adopting the number of preachers in the first year of each decade as my basis, in this comparative statement, that I have shewn the most unfavourable view, I beg to assure them, that had I taken the basis of column No. 10, in table No. 6, I should have shown the comparative loss more than three times the amount presented, that is, nearly One Million.

My principle is this, that a capitalist, with £10,000 and 500 agents employed, should produce a proportionate result to the man who is embarked with only one half or a third of the amount of capital and agents. I know we must not limit the Holy One of Israel. I know that we cannot controul human wills. I know that we cannot prevent diabolic agencies, and ward off natural evils. Yet, with all these allowances, can we forego the conviction that were the greater Wesleyan capital as wisely appropriated, and as diligently worked, as the primitive capital of more primitive times, that the results of ministerial labours and conferencial proceedings would have been far superior to what they are, and more nearly upon a par, to say no more, with the successes of those who laboured much more extensively, in more inauspicious times, and under less favourable circumstances, than those who itinerate the reduced circuits of modern methodism.

Nor should we omit to note the periods of more marked variation. Taking the first decade as our ratio, at table No. 6, it will be seen that the comparative falling off was first most obviously perceptible at 1819. So that the great mass of defection, clearly belongs to the last thirty years, the last two of which will prove the least productive of all.

How is it to be accounted for, that the ministry of the first fifty years so greatly surpassed the ministry of the last thirty? And how can we account for the fact, that the ministry of the last decade was not equal in its successes by one half, to the two preceding ones? It would really appear as if larger circuits were preferable to smaller ones, that men less educated and refined, were better fitted for ministerial successes, than those more erudite and more polished; that men of scantier means and fewer accommodations, were in a superior condition for gospel ministers,

than those of more enlarged resources, and more attractive abodes ; in short, that the less they were paid, the better they succeeded ; the more they laboured, the longer they lived ; and the harder they fared, the fewer became worn out and dependant. However, it appears, also that this department is greatly suggestive, and without further enlarging, I observe, that a reference to the columns shewing the number of members to a minister, will prove that the increase of those to each preacher is but very small, by no means so great as to lay any material additional labour on the itinerant preachers ; and even against this we must not omit to state, that if they have more members to visit, they have smaller circuits to perambulate, to say nothing of the services of an increased body of supernumerary ministers ; and indeed our table shews, that, including these with the other class of preachers, the difference is but small.

So far, my observations apply mostly to the United Kingdom ; but we must look at it a little more in the departmental detail, in order to see *where*, as well as *when*, the comparative falling off has occurred.

It would have made my schedule too complicate and expensive, to have added the results of my comparisons of each portion of the Kingdom, as I have done on the whole British connexion ; I have however applied the same rule to Ireland, Scotland, and Wales, as I have to the whole, as will be seen by table No. 7, and hence I am able to state, regarding England, that had she kept pace in her successes in recent, with primitive times, instead of being 329,897, she would have numbered 506,105 ; and Ireland instead of being 22,221, would have realized 94,611. As to Scotland and Wales they have more than reached their primitive ratio, having succeeded better than in the first period. So that the great computed deficiency has taken place in England and Ireland. Had Scotland merely realized her primitive ratio, she would have now had only 2530 members, instead of 4319 ; and if Wales kept to her ratio of the same period, she would have shown an increase of 14,642. instead of 14,058 which we may view as a mere variation

England has made the most steady and gradual advances. Ireland has fluctuated considerably ; for in 1801 she had 24,233 members, upwards of 2000 more

than she has now. Then she had 81 preachers in full work and six supernumeraries; now, 127 preachers and 36 supernumeraries. In 1814 she reached 29,388 members, while in 1818 she fell to 19,052. Scotland and Wales have been comparatively stationary during the last five years.

By a reference to the columns shewing the number of members to a minister, it will appear that, during the 80 years, Ireland has averaged 200, Scotland, about 100, and Wales about 130 members to a minister: hence it is clear which portion is the most costly to the connexion as a whole, supposing that the ministers share alike in their annual stipend. In fact, it seems that Scotland has been receiving HARD UPON A THOUSAND A YEAR FROM THE CONTINGENT FUND, FOR SEVERAL YEARS PAST!

CHAPTER IV.

CANDIDATES FOR MEMBERSHIP, &C.

I shall now proceed to another portion of Wesleyan economy, on which I should be happy to possess a greater amount of information than I do. I allude to the admission of persons upon trial for membership. To many it is an extraordinary feature, while it is attended with more difficulties than hitherto met with. Though this is a part of the system which is not formally recorded in the published minutes, I will here apprise the reader that the substance of what I shall presently bring forward, has appeared in the *Christian Witness* for January, 1847, and as the letter referred to was noticed at the time, and in no case, that I know of, contradicted, I conclude the reader may confide in their general correctness. To commence then, I observe that in the years 1844, 1845, and 1846, there were reported to be upon trial, in the March quarters of these three years, the following numbers:—25,000, 20,000, and 19,230, equal to 64,200. This is an astonishing fact, but how much more so, that this is only one

fourth part of the number so admitted in those three years ! as we have reason to believe there was a similar number in each of the quarters of those years, which would be four-fold the latter amount, *i. e.* 256,800 individuals seeking church membership in that period. Now (not forgetting the doings of death and emigration,) if this is admitted as generally true, may we not anxiously enquire, how is it that the entire increase of the number in the connexion at home and abroad for the same years, was only 17,778, and that in the United Kingdom the number was under ten thousand : — can any satisfactory answer be given to the spontaneous enquiry, — what is become of them ? I wish slightly to pursue this subject, and with my readers' permission, I will do so.

It is the dictate of wisdom to ascertain why the body does not retain what it has secured. For so great an effect there must be a cause ; it has, to some extent, been investigated. It is clear that the ministry plies its sanctified ability efficiently to a certain extent. They gain, but they do not keep their converts. It will be well to examine this somewhat mysterious, momentous, and appalling fact. It may be asked, Why is it they are so successful to the point of admission upon trial ? Why so unsuccessful as to their full admission into the Society, or else as to their subsequent retention ? Why is this power to induce an effort to become members so greatly superior to the power of retaining them in the church ? Why is the zeal so apparent to procure converts, and so successful in its issue, so much greater than that which is evinced in edifying and securing the results of former conquests ? Would not HE who blesses the effort to awaken, bless also an equally diligent effort to keep awake ? If these persons were as well satisfied with the system and its administration, as they are with the ministry, have we any reason to believe they would leave such a religious home ? Some might, many might, considering men's moral propensities, and our world as we find it, — "offences will come" — but would such a majority do so ? Allowing the worst, as to poor humanity, can we believe that so many thousands, so far enlightened by a gospel ministry, so far on their way to one of the folds of the great shepherd, would turn back, not enter, or if entered, abandon it for another fold ?

If the Holy Spirit blesses the preaching of the system, thereby setting His seal to its truth and efficacy, would He not as certainly, as extensively, bless the polity of the system and its administration, if that also was equally in accordance with His holy will? If the character of the system were as efficient as the character of the ministry it employs, why should not the former be as marked for nurturing and appropriating to its own operations and aimings, those whom the latter have prevailed on to become candidates. If we know that a certain agency produces a certain result—as the probationers before us—we see and rejoice in the glorious issue. If we see these probationers under a given polity—as in the present instance—and yet when annually sought they are not to be found—we see, we conceive, the inadequacy of its internal polity or administrations, and lament it. If it is true that he who sows sparingly shall reap sparingly, and he that sows plentifully shall reap plentifully, however numerous the exceptions to the rule in matters sublunary, will there not be an accession of moral and religious treasure, in proportion to the fidelity and diligence put forth?

If then we see the preaching department successful, and the more internal arrangements or administrations of the system unsuccessful, to what conclusions are we conducted?

I leave these enquiries, hoping they may become suggestive to others who can more fully pursue the subject, and more ably discuss it.

There is yet another topic I wish to introduce, because of its immediate connexion with the preceding statements and observations, as well as of its supreme importance—I mean the candidates, and the proportion who were afterwards admitted into the society. And I am happy to be in a position to quote the minutes of conference for the year 1847. At page 168, I meet with the following statement:—"The numbers received on trial in Great Britain during the year, may be generally appreciated from the fact, that, in the last March quarter, 14,737 were admitted into the societies." Here then we have a fact as our basis and our rule, on which we may safely depend; and reasoning upon which, we may say, then there were in that methodistical year, at the least, 50,000 candidates admitted to membership. And I will add, if I am justified

in my inference from the fact so far, I may venture a little farther, and say, we have here a view of the actual numbers admitted, and that the numbers on trial must have been considerably more, as appears from the wording of the quotation, and so far I hope confirmatory of former observations. It is painfully surprising to find, notwithstanding such an admission of members in the one March quarter of that year, that on page 88 of the same minutes, there is this strange and almost incredible statement, that in Great Britain there was a decrease in numbers, of "two thousand and eighty-nine"! although it would seem that some 50,000 must have been taken into the church "during the year." Fifty thousand admitted, and 2,089 decrease! and this applies only to Great Britain.

To take an impressive view of the matter, we will suppose that during the last five years, at the rate of 50,000 were annually admitted into society in Great Britain, this would amount to 250,000, and a reference to the minutes shews us that the entire net increase of Great Britain and Ireland, for these five years, was only 4,488 members!

Thus I have ventured a few observations on Methodism, on Wesleyanism, "the minutes of the conference," their numerical statistics, as to the circuits, the travelling preachers, the worn-out ministers, and the members of England, Ireland, Scotland, and Wales. I have shewn the decennial state, commencing 1769, terminating 1849, a period of 80 years; the actual numerical state as to supernumerary and working ministers and members of each portion of the United Kingdom, and the sum total of the whole. I have given a column shewing the comparative numerical condition of members, the number of members to a minister, and a proportionate view of supernumerary to the working ministers, and those as they touch upon each of our four departments of the United Kingdom. I have also added a few statements upon the kindred subjects of persons admitted upon trial for membership, and those admitted into the society from that class.

With regard to all, and to each of which topics, I have adhered, as well as I could, to the facts of the case. Upon these I have sometimes reasoned, at others enquired; now I have wondered, then I have—shall I say, reflected?—

perhaps blamed—and who? Those whom it may concern.

I will here resort to what may become a prolific source of objection to some of the tales my tables have told, especially the column referring to the comparative state of the numerical condition,

It may be said, it is mere supposition, or guess work—and therefore of no value.

Now, be it observed, there are but two parts of this pamphlet that can be at all referred to by such an anticipated objection. One is in reference to the members in the society, the other, as to the persons upon trial, and those admitted into the classes.

As to the first, I observe, my computations are based upon a recorded fact, for the minutes inform me that, from the year 1769 to 1779 there was an increase of 14,244. This is a matter of fact. I remind the reader that I have given four columns, based on different facts, and shewing different results, that is, four rates of increase per minister, in each ten years; and, taking the least of these, the increase was at the rate of—say, ten members to each minister per year. It is also recorded, that, in the next decade, the increase, on the same scale, was at the rate of twelve; and that in the following, it was at that of eleven per minister annually. Now my computations are not based on the two last facts, where there is the largest increase, but on the former, where there is the lowest for the first forty years—and upon them my computations rest. What has been, we sometimes say, may be. Well then, twelve members per year, per minister, have been realized, and why not be realized again? eleven have been made, and why not so again? And why might I not have taken the highest rate for my basis? which would have shewn a state of things still worse. Well then, twelve have been procured, and why not maintained? What in the circuits to prevent it, are they smaller? What in the population, is it reduced? What in the gospel, is it weaker? What in society, is it more barbarous? in its education, is it less? in its resources, are they reduced? Twelve has been the annual increase per minister, and, we say, why not continued by those who have succeeded the worthies of Primitive Methodism—the coadjutors of the founder?

by those who itinerate smaller circuits, who have a better theological training, who have greater facilities, fewer oppositions, more colleagues, and much nearer together? Upon this scale I have computed, and my computation is based on a conferencial fact! Is this mere guessing? Then I will guess on!

And as to the persons admitted on trial, and then into the classes. To this I say, as to the former, ALEPH's statements have been long in print and uncontradicted; I therefore consider they are incapable of being vitiated. And as to the latter we have, as a basis to rest upon, the conference minutes of 1847. Here then, my observations, I presume, stand a pillar firmer than Pompey's. Is this guessing? Then I will still guess!

If, however, I have not overrated the value of my communications, there is something here not only for objectors, but for every lover of Methodism and truth, and human progress in the best, and therefore, the most extended sense. Something here for a "commentator of no mean order;" men capable of examining "the philosophy" of Wesleyan "economy," and its varied complicated, and, in many respects, its inexplicable results.

Perhaps, however, the conference, in its plenitude of records and condescension, may be able to supply certain ellipses, fill up certain blanks, reconcile certain discrepancies, correct certain errors, and thus remove the doubts and misgivings of thousands, whose best affections are engaged in the welfare of the connexion,

Will it be allowed the author to make a few observations and suggestions before he brings his little book to a close? If so, he will commence with, what all Methodists appear greatly attached to, conferences.

Conferences then, in themselves, are not necessary evils; but conferences, of a class, and especially of the clergy, have but too generally proved so.—

Conferences for the purpose of collecting and exhibiting information, of stating facts, of promoting union of feeling and efforts among neighbouring churches, of diffusing what is concentrated for the general edification of a community, or of the church of Christ at large.—

Conferences for ascertaining what, and where are to be found the needful resources for christian benevolence; the numerical and the monetary power of a district, or county, or a denomination.—

Conferences to bring together the stars of the day, the giants of the times, that their light may shine and their power administer the needful impetus for the legitimate objects of general interest. —

Conferences for the purpose of suggestion as to what may, or ought to be attempted and done, or improved, and how the improvement may be most prudently and speedily made. —

Conferences of christian brethren, imbued with the truths of divine revelation, and enriched with the spirit of its divine author ; of the seniors and the juniors of the preaching and non-preaching classes. —

Conferences where the presiding spirit holds his seat by the voluntary suffrages of the assembled, and whose fitness for the office is the only reason for possessing it. —

Conferences where the members may venture to speak their minds. and where every speaker can be fairly heard, and candidly reported. —

Such conferences as these will be a source of unmixed gratification to every right-minded person.

But those conferences who wish to be considered authoritative, who aim at exacting obedience, who insist upon conformity to their dictum, who imperatively require such and such a defined course of proceeding, under certain perils and penalties ; who, in effect, set up a co-ordinate authority with the author of life and salvation and His word ; who rule rather than reason, who command rather than persuade, who order where they ought to solicit, who adopt their own course without duly considering the rights and wishes of others. —

Those conferences, whose usual mode is “you shall” instead of “will you” ; who tax rather than receive what is freely given, who dictate where they ought to suggest. —

Those conferences, where the few hold the reins, and the many tamely submit ; where the president is one of a clique seated in the chair of authority by manoeuvre, and not by votes legitimately procured and voluntarily given. —

Conferences where men are idolized on the one hand, and cajoled on the other ; where personal aims are more the order of the day than the proper object of all christian associations.

Such conferences as these prove withering, blasting, a curse rather than a blessing ; and such have nearly all

ecclesiastical conclaves hitherto proved, in the long run, and such, many do not hesitate to say, to a lamentable extent, is the Wesleyan conference of the present day.

And as to circuits, viewing them as a central congregation, with its smaller and rural branches : it has often been asked, why should a circuit appeal to a conference, bow to a conference, defer to conference, wait for a conference, when they have their scriptural authority and efficient agencies among themselves, and find it necessary to come to immediate action ? It appears to many, a monstrous thing, that a circuit does not primarily hold its courts as an independent community, on its own account, but more as an integral part of a great whole, and for the welfare of others, that it does not meet to transact merely its own business and manage its own affairs, but to carry out and carry on the resolutions and interests of, to a great extent, an unknown and unappreciable multitude of others. That it, primarily, neither originates, appropriates, nor subordinates its meetings, resources, business, and successes to its own direct and immediate benefit, and then the ultimate good of others, but first attends to the conferencial dictations and enactments, and then manages for itself as well as it can : and why should not a circuit have the power, as it certainly has the right, of managing its own affairs, employing its own agents, appropriating its own resources, of choosing its own minister as well as paying him, appointing its own collections, keeping its own accounts and treasury, of supporting its own institutions, building and paying for its own chapels, &c. ? If a circuit has the above asserted right, then it is its duty to assert it, to exercise it, to take all the duties and responsibilities upon itself, to repudiate foreign interference and reject mere human controul and self-constituted authority.

And in the next place, why should superintendents be conference agents, or spies, or a police staff ? Why not each a free man among his people and charge, as the servant of Christ and his church. It can be easily shown that a superintendent minister holds a singular and not very enviable position. As a member of the conference he is a legislator, as an agent, one of the executive. The conference is supreme, the circuit subordinate. In every meeting he is supreme, because the conference is so ; for he represents that august body where he presides.

If any part of conferencial law is delared unsuitable to any given locality or occasion, he is there to elaborate its origin and aimings. If any violate it, he is there to inflict the awarded penalty. Any reflection on the wisdom, or insubordination to the authority of conference, is a reflection and an insult to him, for he has enacted or approved of what has passed, and has become the law of the house. And yet the same reverend gentleman must stand in the pastoral relation too. How can two so ill agreed walk together? how can they be safely and beneficially sustained? The pastor, the judge, the principal, the agent, the master, the servant, in the same identical portion of individual humanity, — enough to break it down. Just survey this itinerant minister a little, and then ask your own questions. Consider his conferencial, districtorial, and circuit relations and positions,—his agency for the book-room, his chairmanship of every connexional court, his *ex-officio* membership of every committee and institution of the body. See how much of the secretary, and how much of the treasurer, the accountant, and the clerk, enters into the character and habits of every superintendent. See the collections he has to announce in public, how many to make in private, the amounts, the remittances to secretaries, treasurers, and the book-room, the schedules he has to prepare for the circuit, the district, and the conference. He is a complete financier! Why, the affairs of a circuit are enough in amount, complication, and importance, without any thing above it: and besides, there are the chapel trusts, the band of local brotherhood, of leaders, with the ordinaries and extraordinaries of the sphere; and these *are*, in some tolerable degree, managable; but those of the connexion, who will aver that they are? It appears that their allegiance is divided, that their relations are at variance, that their interests clash, and that their responsibilities to the conference and to the Lord Jesus Christ, often place them in a very great dilemma. However, I claim no right to interfere nor to dictate, but do avail myself of a Briton's and a christian's right to give utterance to my opinions; if worthless, let them rot; if sound, let them flourish. With this avowal, I would add, nevertheless, those who prefer the existing mode, have a right to adopt and perpetuate it; they can sit under their own vine, and

enjoy their own fig tree ; and they ought to do so until they are sure they are shown a more excellent way. Yet I venture to ask, If they will retain their present mode, must they not exorcise the reigning spirit, reduce its gigantic power, banish cliqueism ? Must they not have a large infusion of the noble, disinterested, and magnanimous,—the laborious and self-denying character of the first race of Methodist preachers ; those “preachers of the gospel” of more prosperous times in Methodist societies ? Those who admit this, will unite in the following prayer :—And may the Great Head of the church hasten “the good time coming” for their own, the churches, and the world’s sake.

My acquaintance with Wesleyanism is not recent, I trust not exactly superficial : I know my views are not cyclopiian, nor green-eyed. My opinions have not been hastily formed ; they do not rest on theory, but facts ; and I trust I may say I have not been premature nor irrelevant in my observations. I may be allowed to observe, that I have been guided rather by what she has effected, than by connexional standards ; looked more at what has been done, than what is believed ; at the issue of her operations, rather than conferential edicts and proclamations ; in short, judging of the system as I do of men, by what they do ; and while, as I do, I yield admiration due to the character of the Wesleyan ministry, and its value to my redeemed fellow creatures, I do not conceive I am thereby inhibited from giving publicity to facts and opinions that may seem to question the propriety of my personal regards. As with individuals, those who tell us of our faults, are our best friends ; so it is with communities. Wesleyanism is evidently not effecting all that her resources and position requires ; all that her people have a right to expect, what the condition of the nation needs, nor what the organization properly constituted and imbued and applied, is capable of producing, or the increase of population imperatively demands ; what she herself has done at former periods : nor, above all, what is looked for by her divine and gracious master.

The comparative declension of the body, is a “*sorrowful reality*,” and those who attempt to direct attention to it, do not deserve contempt, ridicule, or abuse. Methodism shows what may be effected on christian principles, with

a potent general, a band of subalterns, and attendant pioneers. She exhibits a great amount of christianity in her masses, and possesses an agency more numerous and efficient, in the gratuitous principle, than any other system. If she was as scriptural in her constitution, usages, and rule, and as simple in her polity as we may conclude the apostolic churches were, she might astonish the world more than she has already. If she could be as equable in the distribution of honour, as ready to treat with respect, as anxious to assist in necessity, to visit in affliction the local preaching corps as she is tenacious of appointing their work and receiving their contributions, a great stumbling block would be removed. If she would systematize with less avidity, and pastorate with more vigilance, her successes would be thousands-fold. If she would be content to take the mere over-sight of district and circuit, which superior wisdom and more elevated christian love will ever on the whole and in the end secure to their subject ; be more suggestive than authoritative, less jealous of officialities, more of the growth in grace of her great charge, labour for christianity and not the connexion, bear officials' moral liberty, advise rather than controul, stimulate more by a Pauline example than by legislative enactments and conferential rules—animate by suitable instructions and encouraging addresses, rather than imperatively demanding and rigidly executing conformity to rule and attention to pecuniary concerns. If she would pay the rightful attention to the local ministry prepare them for their great work, but more tolerably treat them as brethren of the same household—allow them a share and a place in the general councils and responsibilities, as well as in the *labours* of their locality, and the *liberty of supporting* the connexion by their contributions, there would be less need of increasing the stipendiary ministry—and not only would better feelings be promoted between the local and the itinerant ministers by having *one interest*, but the work of religion we have reason to believe would be immensely promoted—to say nothing of the pecuniary question involved in the remark—not altogether unworthy of notice at a time when there is a comparative decrease of numbers. Some advocate more stipendiaries and a race of bishops ; I say improve your local bond and you will not need the first, and as for bishops there are too many of them in the

world already ! they could all be spared and not one missed except by those who vote them a nuisance ! I would say at the expence of a little repetition do justice to the priceless labourers, let them be esteemed highly for their work's sake, and then who knows but that their Maker would yet more evidently honor the itinerant brotherhood. Don't hang all the bells on one horse, let there be a wise, a righteous and an equitable distribution of power, honor, and courtesy. Let the people get rid of the fiction that the men adjudged capable of shewing the way of salvation are incapable, or unworthy, or have no right to a share in the most important deliberations and administrations of the church.

To conclude, I have designedly meddled with no man's character—impugned no man's motive—the former is not my aim the latter is not my province. The character of my neighbour is as valuable to him as mine is to me, their motives may be of the best quality. As I will not question theirs so neither will I avow my own, if it does not appear in my book it is known to one above. I have known Methodism long, I once made choice of her. In my feeble way I served her long, would I had served her better ! I was never easy after the declaratory laws of 1835. Though not one of her converts—owing my first religious impressions to other sources, I joined her—after I had given myself to God ; I owe something to her, perhaps much, her people, her literature, her services, and many of her ministers. I have laboured with the local ministry, her leaders and committee men, &c., and not without mental and spiritual remuneration, and I hope not without evidence of good effected.

Old and dear love is not easily surrendered, he loves her still as a valued portion of Christ's church, he would aid rather than hinder her, and he is convinced that he could not do a better thing for her than write this little volume on her subject, and present it to God for His blessing.

TABLE I.—*Annual View of the Numerical State of Wesleyan Methodism for the last 82 Years.*

Year.	ENGLAND.				IRELAND.			
	Circuits.	Preachers	Super.	Members.	Circuits.	Preachers	Super.	Members.
1767	25	73	2	22410	9	19		2801
8	28	81	1	22909	8	16	1	2700
9	30	79	1	24256	10	19	1	3180
1770	33	82	1	25355	9	19		3124
1	32	86	1	26437	10	22	1	3632
2	32	86	3	26579	10	24	1	3792
3	33	89	1	27726	10	23	1	4013
4	33	94	0	29522	10	25		4341
5	34	99	2	29680	10	24		4237
6	38	111	1	31120	11	26		4798
7	39	110		31822	12	28		5311
8	40	116	2	31444	14	31		5336
9	41	117		35404	14	32		5940
1780	43	116	2	36669	17	34		6109
1	43	125	1	37287	14	36		6175
2	45	135	1	38800	15	34		6612
3	48	137	4	38892	15	36	1	6053
4	50	136	4	41803	16	35	2	6429
5	54	145	6	43550	15	39	1	7817
6	59	162	5	46635	19	45	2	10345
7	63	165	11	49449	22	51		11313
8	64	176	12	51695	25	54	3	12214
9	66	176	9	56305	28	65	1	14214
1790	68	192	11	56812	29	64	3	13106
1	77	200	11	56613	28	69	2	14158
2	80	213	15	58524	29	70	3	14949
3	89	221	17	59065	30	67	3	13964
4	92	240	16	67561	32	70	6	14077
5	96	248	20	73336	32	72	3	15266
6	98	251	2	76022	33	76	4	16762
7	102	259	9	80426	32	76	5	17004
8	105	276	12	82942	33	73	3	16657
9	111	281	14	89213	34	78	5	16227
1800	114	296	12	88334	35	78	3	19292
1	117	295	13	87292	37	81	6	24233
2	120	309	11	90662	38	80	10	26701
3	127	313	10	93715	38	83	11	24605
4	133	289	39	92923	40	89	9	22954
5	136	333	30	96443	39	89	8	23321
6	139	356	41	103549	41	101	4	23773
7	151	387	38	110576	42	101	4	24560

TABLE I CONTD.—*Annual View of the Numerical State of Wesleyan Methodism for the last 81 Years.*

Year.	ENGLAND.				IRELAND.			
	Circuits.	Preachers	Super.	Members.	Circuits.	Preachers.	Super.	Members.
1808	165	438	40	107684	45	105	4	24550
9	177	456	32	123368	46	109	5	25835
1810	184	489	33	129232	48	114	6	27821
11	227	525	42	136503	48	112	13	28149
12	234	565	42	145892	49	111	11	27823
13	245	573	39	152638	49	97	13	28770
14	253	598	36	164100	49	114	7	29388
15	267	611	46	171723	48	116	16	29357
16	274	639	40	182065	47	114	20	28542
17	276	600	45	183718	47	100	26	21031
18	280	583	49	184780	41	101	21	19052
19	284	580	56	185589	43	100	28	22580
1820	281	572	63	179842	44	102	23	23800
1	285	580	63	189465	44	103	28	23538
2	286	593	69	201214	43	97	33	22718
3	287	612	69	208492	43	103	34	22039
4	295	641	68	215572	40	101	35	22047
5	300	664	76	217117	42	103	34	22077
6	303	664	79	219338	43	104	34	22514
7	309	674	74	225286	42	107	34	22599
8	315	675	81	232393	43	108	37	22760
9	317	682	87	233796	43	108	34	22846
1830	317	679	94	234922	43	110	35	22897
1	323	669	103	234410	45	110	36	22470
2	324	683	122	241696	44	109	38	22899
3	324	696	124	260809	42	107	36	24403
4	329	722	119	275140	42	110	38	25614
5	336	754	111	274104	44	114	39	26037
6	337	786	123	276422	46	118	40	26434
7	342	783	121	276285	49	122	39	26023
8	344	803	133	280351	49	122	38	26244
9	357	843	123	289680	49	120	37	26383
1840	364	858	127	304633	50	133	36	27047
1	365	892	124	308616	52	124	40	27268
2	372	896	135	306539	52	125	38	27630
3	374	881	130	311365	52	125	38	28004
4	377	900	132	318166	53	125	40	28409
5	380	904	144	321507	53	130	35	27926
6	382	913	159	322950	54	126	36	27546
7	385	924	162	321430	54	105	35	24633
8	388	925	171	320919	54	104	35	23142
9	393	937	168	329897	53	127	36	22221

TABLE I CONTD.—*Annual View of the Numerical State of Wesleyan Methodism for the last 82 Years.*

Year.	SCOTLAND.				WALES.			
	Circuits	Preachers	Super.	Members.	Circuits	Preachers	Super.	Members.
1767	5	7		468	1	3		282
8	3	6		482	1	4		250
9	3	7		527	2	4		300
1770	3	7		581	3	7		346
1	2	7		892	3	5		379
2	2	9		703	3	6		309
3	2	8		730	3	6		370
4	2	8		735	3	6		340
5	3	8		669	3	6		416
6	3	9		570	3	7		435
7	4	9		673	3	7		468
8	3	7		614	3	7		497
9	3	9		632	3	7		531
1780	4	9		553	3	7		499
1	3	7		501	3	7		454
2	3	8		459	3	6		458
3	3	8		523	3	7		487
4	4	8		481	3	7		454
5	4	8		534	3	7		530
6	4	8		677	3	7		493
7	6	10		828	3	7		497
8	6	12	1	918	3	8		548
9	5	14	1	1088	3	8		638
1790	8	18		1086	3	7		564
1	7	17	1	1173	3	8		532
2	9	17	2	1284	3	8		585
3	10	18	1	1313	3	8		583
4	11	21		1179	3	9		551
5	8	16		1198	4	9		547
6	8	16	1	918	4	10		822
7	7	15	1	1159	4	12		1018
8	7	15	1	1059	4	12		1054
9	6	18		1117	5	11		1195
1800	7	13		1041	5	11		1244
1	8	13		1059	5	11		1178
2	8	16	1	1092	5	12		1199
3	7	16	1	1179	9	22		1255
4	8	16	1	1207	11	24		3078
5	7	13	1	1323	13	34		4149
6	6	15		1375	17	37	1	5879
7	6	15		1470	19	45	2	6464

TABLE I CONTD.—*Annual View of the Numerical State of Wesleyan Methodism during the last 82 Years.*

Year.	SCOTLAND.				WALES.			
	Circuits.	Preachers	Super.	Members.	Circuits.	Preachers	Super.	Members.
1808	6	14		1478	21	48	1	7433
9	9	19		1454	25	59	1	7264
1810	10	18		1506	29	64	1	7259
11	13	19		1734	29	64	1	7397
12	13	23		2038	30	60		7194
13	12	24		2283	30	61		7082
14	14	26		2613	25	58	1	7172
15	14	25		2729	25	58	1	7257
16	15	25		3099	20	48	2	6516
17	15	27	2	3347	21	49	2	6605
18	14	26	1	3656	21	46	3	6669
19	13	25		3786	21	42	3	7230
1820	13	25		3227	24	43	3	7448
1	14	23	1	3112	20	37	5	7977
2	15	26	1	3125	20	34	2	7053
3	13	21		3310	20	39	4	7596
4	16	24		3479	22	42	2	7888
5	16	25		3523	22	42	4	8006
6	15	27		3428	22	42	2	8279
7	16	27	1	3648	22	41	3	8365
8	13	24	1	3953	23	42	5	8040
9	13	22	2	3968	23	43	4	9765
1830	15	23	3	3903	24	45	4	10453
1	15	23	3	3962	25	44	4	10747
2	15	23	1	4087	25	48	6	10489
3	14	23	1	6134	27	51	5	12227
4	14	26	1	4341	26	50	4	12458
5	15	27	1	4310	28	51	8	12574
6	15	28	2	4167	28	54	5	12603
7	15	27	2	3881	27	57	5	12527
8	15	24	2	3508	28	56	1	12942
9	15	25	2	3466	32	56	4	13922
1840	15	25	3	3640	32	59	6	14905
1	14	24	3	3823	33	62	5	16553
2	14	23	2	3868	33	61	6	16320
3	14	23	2	4015	34	60	9	15644
4	14	26	2	4340	35	60	9	15092
5	15	27	2	4485	34	61	10	14786
6	15	26	2	4423	34	61	10	14095
7	15	26	1	4197	35	60	12	13752
8	15	27	2	4176	35	56	14	13766
9	15	26	3	4319	35	60	13	14058

TABLE II.

*Decenary view of the numerical state of Wesleyan Methodism
in England.*

Year.	Circuits.	Travelling Preachers.	Supernumeraries.	Members in the Society.	Ten years' increase per Travelling Preacher.	Number of Members to each Travelling Preacher.	Proportion of Travel-ling Preachers to each Supernumary.	Actual increase in ten years.	Comparative increase in ten years.
1769	30	79	1	24256		307	1 in 79		
1779	41	117		35404	141	302		11148	
1789	66	176	9	54369	162	311	1 ... 19	18965	16510
1799	111	281	14	89213	197	317	1 ... 20	34844	24834
1809	176	456	32	123368	121	260	1 ... 14	34155	39649
1819	284	580	56	185589	136	310	1 ... 10	62221	64341
1829	317	682	87	233796	83	342	1 ... 7	48207	81837
1839	357	843	123	289680	81	343	1 ... 6	55884	96227
1849	393	937	168	329897	47	352	1 ... 5	40217	147303
In Society, 1767.....24,256								305641	470701
Increase, 177911,148								24256	35404
35,404								329897	506105

TABLE IV.

*Decenary view of the Numerical Statistics of Wesleyan
Methodism for Scotland.*

[illegible]

TABLE V.

*Decenary view of the numerical state of Wesleyan Methodism
in Wales.*

[illegible]

*Deceniary view of the Numerical state of Wesleyan Methodism in the
United Kingdom for the last 80 years.*

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
Periods	Travelling Preachers.	Supernumeraries.	Members.	Increase of Members in each Ten Years.	Comparative Increase of Members each 10 Years after the ratio of 1769 to 1779.	Proportion of Travelling Preachers to Supernumeraries,	Decennial Increase of Members per each Travelling Preacher.					The number of Members to each Travelling Preacher.	The No. of Members to the Travelling Preachers and Supernumeraries together.
							Travelling Preachers at the 1st year of each decade.	Travelling Preachers in 1774, & at each 10 Years till 1844.	Average of Travelling Preachers in 1769., & every 10th Year.	Adding together the Travelling Preachers and dividing by 10.	The average of the four preceding columns.		
1769	109	2	28263			1 in 54						269	253
1779	165		42507	14244			130	107	103	102	110	257	
1789	263	11	70305	27791	21722	1 ... 23	168	144	129	134	143	267	256
1799	388	19	107752	37447	34989	1 ... 20	142	120	114	111	121	277	266
1809	643	38	157921	50169	51941	1 ... 16	129	120	97	103	112	245	231
1819	747	87	219185	61264	84174	1 ... 8	95	76	88	80	84	293	262
1829	855	127	270375	51190	99347	1 ... 6	68	63	63	63	64	316	275
1839	1044	166	333451	63076	114815	1 ... 6	73	71	66	67	69	319	275
1849	1150	220	370495	37044	168493	1 ... 5	35	33	33	33	33	322	270
Members at 1769..				28263									
					14244	Increase to 1779.							
					28263	Members at 1769.							
				370495									
					617988								

TABLE VI.

TABLE VII.

Comparative Numerical State of Wesleyan Methodism in the United Kingdom, supposing the Increase had been in proportion to the first 10 Years.

Year.	England.	Ireland.	Scotland.	Wales.	Total.
1789	16510	4648	135	429	21722
1799	24836	9441	210	504	34989
1809	39649	11329	270	693	51941
1819	64341	15831	285	3717	84174
1829	81837	14523	375	2612	99347
1839	96227	15584	330	2674	114815
1849	147303	17315	393	3482	168493
	470701	88671	1998	14111	575481
1769	24256	3180	527	300	28263
1779	11148	2760	105	231	14244
	506105	94611	2630	14642	617988

The Author regrets in reviewing these sheets to perceive several typographical errors, Page 7, the 7th line from the bottom, for "creation" read "location,"

